

deepened our spiritual life. If we employ a method we must be free to accept its results. We believe it is one of the gifts God has given us so that we may know the truth.

This method is employed not only with books written by one writer, but with those such as many medieval chronicles written by a succession of writers often all belonging to one monastic house. But there are works of a different class and with a different literary history, where we have not to deal with one individual writer but with a series so complicated as to be rather a literary growth than an effort of one writer. Broadly speaking the verdict of Higher Criticism in the case of the Old Testament is to substitute for one individual supposed to be the writer (such as Moses) a process involving many writers and revisions or as we should say editions. Your Lordship regrets this substitution and considers that the hypothesis of a literary growth fits in less well with the belief in inspiration than does the hypothesis of a single writer. I say hypothesis for *a priori* (apart from a tradition far from early in date and as I have said left open by the Church for discussion) there is no more reason to postulate one than the other: each is a hypothesis—the one is founded upon tradition, the other upon the result of scientific study. The hypothesis or the conclusion of a literary growth is indeed one that constantly meets us: in early writings it, and not the single writer, is the rule. The nature of the conclusion does not then of itself in any way weaken the results of criticism. For to many of the most pathetic of medieval poems we assign no author: the beauty of the Arthurian cycle—known as the Morte D'Arthur—is incontestable, but it is rather a growth than a production of a single mind. The priceless heritage of Englishmen, the English Chronicle, begun probably at the behest of our great King Alfred, is the production of a school of writers, it exists in different recensions, and has had a long history of its own. In such a continuous expression of the national life there is something at least as grand and as impressive as